

FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

SATURDAY MARCH 14, 2009

Moderator Michael Rydeen called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM in the Pettingill Hall at the Ellis School. There were approximately 335 people in attendance. He asked the audience to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Police Officer Christopher St. Onge.

Moderator Rydeen explained the rules of the meeting. He stated that each speaker would be allowed a maximum time of 4 minutes at the microphone. He informed the audience of a petition received from resident Keith Stanton for a secret ballot on warrant Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 and anything brought up under Article 7. School District Clerk Lori Holmes verified the signatures. The head table was introduced; Annmarie Scribner, School District Attorney Kathy Peahl, School District Clerk Lori Holmes, School Board Chairman Jeff Rowell, School Board Vice Chairman Peg Pinkham, Board Members, Marian Guidoboni and Deb Genthner, Superintendent Normand Tanguay, Financial Administrator Bonnie Sandstrom, Elementary Principal Dawn Lewis and Middle School Principal William Marston. Members of the Budget Committee; Doug McElroy, Mike Nygren, Chairman Charles Kimball and Vice Chairman Andy Kohlhofer. The results of the Town / School Election held on Tuesday, March 10, 2009 were read aloud by the Moderator.

A motion was made by Moderator Rydeen to allow non-residents the opportunity to speak. Seconded by Annmarie Scribner. ***Motion failed by hand count.***

School Board Chairman Jeff Rowell stated that the School District Attorney, the Financial Administrator, the Superintendent, and the 2 School Principals would need to speak on some of the Articles. He made a motion to allow the above referenced people to speak. Seconded by Annmarie Scribner. ***Motion passed by hand vote.***

Budget Committee Vice Chairman Andy Kohlhofer read the report of the Budget Committee and explained the decisions made by the Committee regarding the School budget.

Special Warrant Article 1: To see if the Fremont School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Fremont School Board and the Ellis School Support Staff (AFT-Local #6223) which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

Year

Estimated Increase

2009-2010	\$ 136,682
2010-2011	\$ 59,765
2011-2012	\$ 89,351
2012-2013	\$ 53,468

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$136,682 for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal year. (Not recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee) (Recommended by the Fremont School Board)

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 1. Moved by Jeff Rowell, seconded by Peg Pinkham.

Marian Guidoboni spoke on Article 1. She explained why the Article was termed "special". She explained the proposed Support Staff contract and how they have not received pay increases since 2007. She continued highlighting the changes that were made from the contract that was presented at last years meeting. She summarized the cost of the contract, \$.32 / \$1,000.

Andy Kohlhofer explained why the Budget Committee was not in support of Article 1. He mentioned the state of the declining economy at this time, how many Fremont residents have lost their jobs, and it just was not affordable for the community at this time.

Marian Guidoboni spoke about the proposed health insurance coverage for the Support Staff. She explained that the District would pay for a single person plan (the employee), the cost of any additional family members listed on the plan would be the responsibility of the employee.

Martha Abney spoke in favor of this Article and stated how important and valuable the Support Staff is to the Ellis School. She encouraged everyone to support Article 1.

Anne Beliveau called the question, seconded by Gary Peters.

Moderator Rydeen declared the polls open for Article 1 at 5:55 PM and stated they would remain open for 25 minutes.

He proceeded to Article 2 next.

Article 2: Shall the Fremont School District, if Article 1 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 1 cost items only?

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 2. Moved by Jeff Rowell, seconded by Peg Pinkham.

A motion was made by resident Anne Beliveau to table Article 2 and to proceed to Article 3, because the results of Article 1 were not yet available. Seconded by Peg Pinkham. **Motion passed by hand vote.**

Moderator Rydeen proceeded to Article 3.

Article 3: To see if the Fremont School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Fremont School Board and The Fremont Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2009-2010	\$ 38,737
2010-2011	\$ 42,383

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$38,737 for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal year. (Not recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee) (Recommended by the Fremont School Board)

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 3. Moved by Deb Genthner, seconded by Peg Pinkham.

Deb Genthner explained what the Collective Bargaining Agreement encompassed. She highlighted some of the key areas of the agreement and explained why the School Board supports this Article. She said the agreement would help keep Ellis School competitive and will help retain / attract qualified teachers. She informed the audience that the State average for a teacher's salary in 2007 was \$48,310, while the current average teacher's salary in Fremont is \$47,247.

** Moderator Rydeen announced the polls closed for Article 1 at 6:20 PM.

Andy Kohlhofer gave a detailed explanation of why the Budget Committee did not recommend Article 3.

Deb Genthner stated that the tax impact for this Article would be \$.09 / \$1,000.

Anne Beliveau called the question, seconded by Dave Peterson.

Moderator Rydeen declared the polls open for Article 3 at 6:55 PM and would remain open for 25 minutes. He announced that voters would receive the ballots for the remaining ballot Articles at this time.

He then read aloud the results of Article 1; **Yes: 123 No: 162, Article 1 defeated by ballot vote.**

David Brown made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 1, seconded by Louise Brown. **Motion passed by hand vote.**

** Moderator Rydeen revisited Article 2.

Tom McGall made a motion to discuss Article 6 next. Seconded by Anne Beliveau. **Motion failed by hand vote.**

Resident Linda Zukas made a motion to vote on Articles 2 and 4 together, seconded by Kathy Arsenault. **Motion passed by hand vote.**

Moderator Rydeen declared the polls closed for Article 3 at 7:20 PM.

There was a brief discussion about Article 2 from Andy Kohhofer and Peg Pinkham.

School District attorney Kathy Peahl explained the Article and why it was placed as a Warrant Article.

There being no further discussion on Article 2 Moderator Rydeen proceeded to Article 4 for discussion as was previously voted on during Article 3.

Article 4: Shall the Fremont School District, if Article 3 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 3 cost items only?

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 4. Moved by Peg Pinkham, seconded by Deb Genthner.

Peg Pinkham explained that Article 4 allows the School Board and the Fremont Education Association to enter into new negotiation talks and enables the Board to present a new contract to the voters at a special School District meeting. She reiterated Attorney Peahl's explanation about Article 2, as Articles 2 and 4 are similar. She emphasized the importance of passing Articles 2 and 4.

Attorney Kathy Peahl stated Articles 2 and 4 are general housekeeping Articles.

** At this time Moderator Rydeen read the results of Article 3; **Yes: 118 No: 160, Article 3 defeated by ballot vote.**

There being no further discussion on Article 4, Moderator Rydeen opened the polls at 7:50 PM and would remain open for 25 minutes. He reminded the voters that both Article 2 and Article 4 were being voted on at this time.

Tom McGall made a motion to vote on Article 6 next. Seconded by Anne Beliveau. **Motion passed by hand vote.**

Article 6: To see if the Fremont School District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee's recommended amount of \$10,286,597 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for School District officials and agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of the District. The Fremont School Board recommends \$10,829,515. This Article does not include appropriations voted in other Warrant Articles. (Majority vote required.)

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Budget Committee Recommended</u>	<u>School Board Recommended</u>
1100	Regular Education	\$5,274,503	\$5,585,649
1200	Special Education	1,574,140	1,574,640
1270	Gifted & Talented	0	78,393
1300	Vocation Education	0	0
1400	Other Programs	12,500	61,759
2110	Attendance	1	1
2120	Guidance	126,474	126,474
2130	Health	72,957	74,409
2140	Psychological	134,533	134,533
2150	Speech & Audiology	162,295	161,295
2160	Physical, Occupational & Vision	130,119	131,119
2210	Improvement of Instruction	40,000	52,380
2220	Educational Media	107,069	118,709
2310	School Board	72,615	75,115
2320	Office of Superintendent	230,215	260,777
2330	Special Education Administration	102,712	109,820
2400	School Administration	311,547	311,547
2600	Operation of Plant	366,476	386,476
2700	Student Transportation	532,776	536,776
2900	Support Benefits	324,393	338,371
5100	Debt Service	343,525	343,525
3100	Food Service	149,256	149,256
5300	Federal Grants	<u>218,491</u>	<u>218,491</u>
Total Appropriations		<u>\$10,286,597</u>	<u>\$10,829,515</u>

(\$10,286,597 Recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee)

(\$10,829,515 Recommended by the Fremont School Board)

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 6. Moved by Andy Kohlhofer, seconded by Charles Kimball.

Peg Pinkham gave a detailed explanation about this Article. She praised the Budget Committee for their dedication and diligence to the School's budget. She spoke about the \$309,000 reduction to the budget that the School Board made from the original

Administrations' recommendations. She continued to outline what those reductions were and the areas those reductions would impact. She also spoke about some of the recommended reductions the Budget Committee made.

Andy Kohlhofer explained the Budget Committees recommended budget amount. He stated that the Budget Committee recommended eliminating a 1st and 2nd grade teacher and also the Reading Specialist position. They also recommended eliminating the Enrichment (gifted/talented) program, the ESOL program and all athletic programs. The Committee did not approve funding for new computer equipment or new equipment for the nurse. They also reduced funding for new library books and library equipment.

Keith Stanton asked what the School budget number would be if Article 6 is defeated.

Peg Pinkham answered that a new number would have to be voted on.

Andy Kohlhofer explained why the Budget Committee eliminated the tuition for 7 high school students. He stated that as of January 2009 there was a \$125,000 surplus in tuition line.

Peg Pinkham explained that the final High School tuition bill was \$17,266 less than what was anticipated by the Board. She said the School Board had previously agreed to reduce the \$17,266 from their recommended number. She then asked the Budget Committee if they would also decrease their recommended amount by \$17,266.

The Budget Committee voted unanimously in the affirmative to reduce \$17,266 from their recommended number for a new total of \$10,269,331.

** Moderator Rydeen declared the polls closed for Article 2 and Article 4 at 8:15 PM.

Peg Pinkham explained how the budget process works and how the Administration arrived at the numbers they presented to the School Board. She also spoke about the per pupil cost of \$10,389 for the Ellis students, which she stated is below the State average.

Jeff Rowell spoke about the elimination of teaching positions, the Reading Specialist, the Enrichment Program and about the grim impact it will have on the school community.

Paul McCain stated that when you divide 738 students into \$10,269,331 it equals more than the \$10,389 per pupil cost that was stated.

Peg Pinkham explained how the per pupil cost is determined.

Superintendent Normand Tanguay also gave further explanation as to how the per pupil cost is figured. He also stated that the \$10,389 per pupil figure is for Ellis School students only.

Haley Lane-Therault spoke about the repercussions of eliminating the Health Education teacher. She explained the curriculum for Health Education. She then made a motion to

reinstate the Health Education program with a monetary value of \$68,888.46. Seconded by Abby Dobson.

Peg Pinkham gave clarification on the motion. She stated that any money, which is voted to be added to the budget, does not mean the position is reinstated; the School Board makes the final determination as to how the money is spent.

Andy Kohlhofer offered a point of clarification. He stated that the Budget Committee did not eliminate the Health position, the School Board made that decision. He said the Budget Committee did vote to eliminate the athletic position.

Francis Wells spoke in support of the amendment.

Joyce Robinson stated that she would prefer that students get back to the basics and spend their time learning the basics before adding any "extras".

Neal Janvrin called the question seconded by Kathy Arsenault.

Amendment to add \$ 68,888.46 to the budget defeated by hand vote.

Martha Abney asked what amount of the Budget Committee's recommended cuts are contractual.

Superintendent Normand Tanguay gave an itemized list of the contractual items and also gave additional insight on how the per pupil cost is established.

Kathy Picone stated that if the Budget Committee number is approved, the School District has an obligation to pay all contractual items, which will leave the regular education budget much less, and it will be the regular ed. students that will be impacted from the decreased dollar amount.

Pam McElroy made a motion to add \$539,918 for a total of \$10,812,249. Seconded by Abby Dobson.

Andy Kohlhofer said that the Budget Committee labored for many hours on the School's budget. He believes the areas of the budget that were cut by the Budget Committee were fair and that the School Board could work with those numbers.

Elementary Principal Dawn Lewis explained the negative impact of eliminating a teacher from both grade 1 and grade 2.

Jason Kalgren stated that it is the School Board's decision to spend the budget any way they deem necessary. He asked what other types of cuts could be made.

Tom McGall called the question seconded by Anne Beliveau.

The amendment to add \$539,918 to the budget was defeated by hand vote, Yes- 100 No- 136.

Anne Beliveau moved the question, seconded by Dawn Kalgren.

Moderator Rydeen stated that the amount being voted on is \$10,269,331. He declared the polls for Article 6 open at 9:30 PM, and would remain open for 30 minutes.

***** Moderator Rydeen read the results from Article 2 and Article 4.***

Article 2: Yes -111 No – 137. Article 2 defeated by ballot vote.

Article 4: Yes- 136 No- 109. Article 4 passed by ballot vote.

Moderator Rydeen proceeded to Article 5 while awaiting the results of Article 6.

Article 5: To see if the Fremont School District will vote to raise and appropriate \$16,200 to add an additional high school late bus route to the existing high school transportation contract. (Not Recommended by the Fremont Budget Committee) (Recommended by the Fremont School Board).

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 5. Moved by Marian Guidoboni, seconded by Deb Genthner.

Jeff Rowell made a motion to amend Article 5 to delete the word “additional” and add “to continue the existing”. Seconded by Marian Guidoboni.

The amended article will read; to see if the Fremont School District will vote to raise and appropriate \$16,200 to continue the existing high school late bus route to the existing high school transportation contract.

Jeff Rowell explained that the District would continue using the one late bus and no additional bus is needed. He explained that the late bus accommodates Fremont students who stay after school to participate in sports, clubs, academic support, and other after school activities.

***** Moderator Rydeen announced the polls closed for Article 6 at 10:00 PM.***

Andy Kohlhofer stated that the number of students utilizing the late bus was nominal, and there may be other alternatives; like a smaller bus or even a van which could save the Town money.

Marcia Soares spoke in favor of the late bus. She stated that not all of the high school students drive or may have working parents that are unable to pick up their child from after school activities.

There being no further discussion Moderator Rydeen declared the polls open for Article 5 at 10:20 PM and would remain open for 15 minutes.

** Moderator Rydeen proceeded to Article 7 while awaiting the results of Article 6.

Article 7: "To see if the Fremont School District voters are in favor of having the School Board SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENT a Traditional Letter Grade System of:

90% - 100%	=	A
80% - 89%	=	B
70% - 79%	=	C
60% - 69%	=	D
<60%	=	F

For report cards at Ellis School and STOP the use of the 'Standard Based Reporting System' EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY."

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 7. Peg Pinkham moved the Article, seconded by Deb Genthner.

Joyce Robinson spoke in favor of this Article. Stating that the present grading system is confusing for both the parent and the student.

Moderator Rydeen announced the polls closed for Article 5 at 10:35 PM.

Ida Keane gave an explanation for why she submitted this petitioned Article and the importance of going back to the traditional letter grade system.

Tammy Bond asked if Article 7 would pertain to the entire school.

Peg Pinkham replied yes, it would apply to grades 1-8.

Michael DiCroce called the question, seconded by Richard Butler.

Moderator Rydeen opened the polls at 10:50 PM for Article 7. He stated the polls would remain open for 20 minutes.

Moderator Rydeen read the results of Article 6: **Yes- 113 No- 140. Amended Article 6 defeated by ballot vote.**

** Moderator Rydeen then went back to Article 6 for discussion since the amended Article was defeated.

Haley Lane – Theriault again made a motion to amend the budget to add \$68,888.46. Seconded by Cindy Wells.

Michael DiCroce moved the question, seconded by Dave Brown.

Amendment defeated by hand vote.

A motion to go with last year's budget number of \$10,012,328.00 was made by Michael DiCroce, seconded by Gary Peters

Marian Guidoboni stated for clarification that the amended number is less than the Budget Committee's 2009 budget recommendation.

Dennis Buteau expressed concern about the high property taxes in Fremont and the many residents unable to pay their taxes.

Gordon Muench asked if all of the 2008-2009 appropriated money was spent.

Financial Administrator Bonnie Sandstrom stated the School District will break even or will have a slight deficit.

Gary Arsenault asked residents to give consideration to the budget presented by the School Board.

The School Board asked the Moderator for a 5-minute recess.

During the 5-minute recess, Moderator Rydeen announced the polls closed at 11:10 PM for Articles 5 & 7.

When the meeting resumed, Peg Pinkham explained that during the recess the Board had voted to reduce their recommended amount by \$229,077.

Allie Burke asked what the tax impact would be on the amended number of adding the \$229,077 to the budget.

Peg Pinkham answered about .53 cents

Nancy Bernhardt called the question. Abby Dobson seconded.

Motion to go with last year's budget amount was defeated by hand vote.

Motion by Peg Pinkham to amend the bottom line to \$10,498,408, seconded by Deb Genthner.

Peg Pinkham stated that the School Board would be able to accept that amount.

Allie Burke called the question for Article 6 for the amount of \$10,498,408, seconded by Annmarie Scribner.

Moderator Rydeen declared the polls for Article 6 (2nd ballot vote) open at 12:00 AM and would remain open for 15 minutes.

** Moderator Rydeen read the results of Article 5 and Article 7.

Article 5 Yes- 96 No- 130. Article 5 defeated by ballot vote.

Article 7 Yes- 173 No- 53. Article 7 passed by ballot vote.

Sharon Girardi made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Articles 2, 4, 5 & 7. Seconded by Bob Rydeen. **Motion passed by hand vote.**

Article 8: "To see if the Fremont School District will require all votes of the Fremont School Board and the Fremont School District Budget Committee relative to warrant articles to be recorded votes and that the numeric tally of any such vote be printed in the School District warrant next to the affected warrant article. (Majority vote required)."

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 8. Peg Pinkham moved the Article, seconded by Jeff Rowell.

Moderator Rydeen announced the polls closed for Article 6 (2nd ballot vote) at 12:15 AM.

Jeff Rowell explained Article 8.

There being no further discussion, **Article 8 passed by hand vote.**

Moderator Rydeen read the results of Article 6 (2nd ballot vote): **Yes -125 No- 85.**

Article 6 passed by ballot vote.

Article 9: To transact any other business, which may legally come before this meeting.

Moderator Rydeen read aloud Article 9.

Jeff Rowell moved the Article, seconded by Peg Pinkham.

Yvonne Oullette made a motion to restrict reconsideration on Article 6, seconded by Annmarie Scribner. **Motion passed by hand vote.**

Annmarie Scribner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 AM. Seconded by Bob Rydeen. **Unanimous vote to adjourn at 12:30 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,



Lori A. Holmes
School District Clerk